



STATE SENATOR • LIZ BRATER • 18TH DISTRICT

Brater Press Release

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BRATER PUSHES TO UPHOLD HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARDS

Brater: Health affects and allergens created by genetically modified plants unknown

LANSING—The state Senate today passed legislation that eliminates the ability of local governments to regulate genetically modified seeds. Giant corporate farms have been lobbying for this decrease in local control, which is likely to harm small and medium sized farms and pose increased health problems for allergy-sensitive individuals.

“These organisms have been altered at a molecular level,” said Brater. “We have no idea what the long-term health affects and allergens created by genetically modified seeds might be.”

Outdoor experimental crops, such as corn engineered to produce blood clotters and contraceptives, could present significant contamination risks to the food system. Pesticide resistance engineered into these plants can be passed to plants in the wild, creating the potential for weeds that cannot be killed by conventional means. Organic farmers will be at risk of losing their organic certification and markets if genetically modified seeds contaminate their fields. Unknown allergens could be created by uncontrolled cross-pollination, and many citizens could experience increased reactions or illness from new pollens and other air-borne contaminants. Additionally, small farmers face the possibility of terminator seeds pollinating with natural seeds forcing them to buy new seeds every year.

“Senate Bill 777 is part of a nationwide pre-emptive effort by agribusiness to take control of decisions away from local communities, threaten the public health and endanger the livelihood of organic farmers,” said Brater.

Currently, local units of government may adopt ordinances that regulate or ban the use of certain seeds, most commonly genetically modified seeds. The legislation would prevent local governments from passing ordinances which prohibit or regulate the labeling, sale, storage, transportation, distribution, use, or planting of agricultural, vegetable, flower, or forest tree seeds.

This bill is opposed by the Greater Grand Rapids Food Systems Council, Center for Food Safety, Organic Food and Farm Alliance, Michigan Environmental Council, and Sierra Club.

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State Senator Brater represents Senate District 18 which includes the cities of Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, and Chelsea, the Villages of Barton Hills and Dexter, and the following townships: Ann Arbor, Augusta, Dexter, Freedom, Lima, Lyndon, Northfield, Salem, Scio, Sharon, Superior, Sylvan, Webster and Ypsilanti. She is the minority vice chair of the natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee and the Agriculture, Forestry, and Tourism Committee.